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MINISTER STRAHL HIGHLIGHTS CANADA'S PROGRESS ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES AT THE UNITED NATIONS

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NEW YORK CITY (May 1, 2008) - The Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, today will highlight Canada's progress on Indigenous issues at a gathering of international delegates who attended the UN Permanent Forum in New York City.

"We are taking concrete steps to deal with issues that matter to Aboriginal peoples here in Canada," says Minister Strahl. "Our government is committed to delivering real and measurable results, and since coming to office two years ago we have done just that."

"The Government of Canada continues to address a number of key areas for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, including fundamental human rights through Bill C-21," adds Minister Strahl. "For 30 years, section 67 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* has exempted First Nations communities governed by the *Indian Act* from human rights protection. We believe this has gone on too long and needs to be corrected."

Canada has long demonstrated its commitment to also actively advancing indigenous rights abroad. "The UN Declaration aside, Canada will continue to take effective action, at home and abroad, to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples," says Minister Strahl.

Minister Strahl will also highlight a number of areas where the Government of Canada is making substantial progress including: education; resolving specific claims; safe drinking water; protection for women and children; and matrimonial property rights on-reserves. The Minister will also talk about the important step in the Government of Canada's commitment to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, with the naming of Justice Harry LaForme as the Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

"Canada remains committed as ever to deliver real results for our Aboriginal population. We believe in moving forward for all Canadians with results that are not simply aspirations or non-binding. Concrete action is what we are committed to delivering," adds Minister Strahl.

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